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SUBJECT: Final Interim Technical Committee meetings in Bukavu and Goma

Ref: Kinshasa 124

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Vice-Admiral Etumba, who is likely to continue to play a leading role in the military commission created by the Goma accords, pressed ahead with interim meetings with armed groups in Bukavu February 4-5, CNDP in Goma February 6 and other armed groups in Goma February 7. All parties were confused by the presidential decree February 2 establishing a "Peace Program" for the Kivus. Armed groups, especially the CNDP, objected to not being consulted in advance; Mai Mai groups objected to "special treatment" for the (Tutsi) CNDP and FRF. Etumba could not fully explain how the structure he was advocating during his interim meetings would fit into the "Peace Program." But he pressed ahead anyway, and succeeded in gaining acceptance from all sides, with many caveats. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) Naval Forces Chief of Staff Vice-Admiral Didier Etumba extended his stay in North and South Kivu well beyond his original expectations February 4-7, carrying on with his effort to "sell" armed groups on a structure and timetable for the Peace and Security Technical Commission called for in the Kivus conference Acte d'Engagement of January 23. The anticipated visit of a senior political figure to participate in this effort never materialized, so Etumba carried the burden alone. (Note: Interior Minister Denis Kalume and National Assembly President Vital Kamerhe turned up with a delegation in Bukavu February 5, but were there to inspect damage from the February 3 earthquake. End note.)

¶3. (SBU) Etumba thought he had squared away the North Kivu armed groups in meetings January 28-31, but CNDP reopened debate and Etumba conducted another meeting with them February 6, and with the others February 7. He had met South Kivu armed groups, minus the Banyamulenge FRF, in Goma on February 2 and gained their preliminary acceptance (sweetened by handing over \$10,000). However, he deemed it necessary to meet all the South Kivu groups in their own province, which he expected to accomplish February 4.

¶4. (SBU) Meanwhile, without forewarning to any party in the Kivus including Etumba himself, President Kabila issued a decree February 2 elaborating a "Programme Amani" (Peace Program) for the Kivus. Articles 9-12 of the decree sets up the Mixed Peace and Security Technical Committee as contemplated by the Acte d'Engagement. Article 9 states that the Technical Commission is composed of representatives of the government, two delegates each from CNDP and FRF, and one from each of the other armed groups signatory to the Acte, as well as representatives of the international community. Etumba had billed his Kivus meetings as an ad hoc effort to prepare the way for the establishment of the Technical Commission, but now he had to carry on with meetings after the Technical Commission was already established -- with many question marks hanging over it.

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Meetings in Bukavu  
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15. (SBU) On February 4, a MONUC helicopter carried Etumba, General Bikram Singh (Commander of MONUC's Eastern Division, now based in Goma), John Almstrom (MONUC Chief of Staff, now delegated to oversee post-conference developments in the Kivus), and international facilitators (EU, UK, U.S.) to Bukavu. Many of the residents of South Kivu's capital had spent the night outdoors, fearing aftershocks from the earthquake of the day before; however, damage was not widespread in the areas of the city through which the delegation drove.

16. (SBU) A principal objective of the trip was aborted when it was learned that the Banyamulenge dissident group known as FRF (Republican Front for Federalism) or Group of 47 was not going to appear. Etumba nonetheless went ahead with the day's meeting with the 13 assembled Mai Mai groups, with the hope of meeting the FRF the following day. (It was not clear whether FRF was playing hard to get or whether there had been a simple failure of communication between FRF and MONUC, but MONUC was confident that FRF would appear at the helicopter pick-up point in Minembwe the following day for transport to Bukavu, and in fact this did occur.)

17. (SBU) Undeterred by news he had just received of the issuance of the presidential decree of February 2, Etumba proceeded, as he had done in all his meetings the previous week in Goma, to describe and solicit acceptance of a structure ("organigram") and timetable ("chronogram") for implementing the Acte. His organigram called for two sub-commissions (one military, the other humanitarian and social) under a co-chairmanship, each divided into North and South Kivu sections, and each of those sub-divided into "cells." His

KINSHASA 00000143 002 OF 004

chronogram set forth an extremely ambitious schedule (elaboration of a disengagement plan within nine days, assembling of armed groups in transit centers in 28 days, departure for brassage or demobilization in 37 days, return of IDPs and refugees and presentation of lists of detained persons in 40 days), but now, at Almstrom's and Singh's insistence, Etumba hastened to say that his timetable was merely "indicative." (Note: In Singh's analysis, which he provided later to the international facilitators, this timetable was both totally unrealistic and designed to trap the international community into putting pressure on CNDP and FRF.)

18. (SBU) The South Kivu Mai Mai groups' acceptance of the structure and timetable was not in doubt, but they used the occasion to speak at length about their grievances. These included: objections to Kabila's "Amani" decree naming two CNDP and two FRF to the Technical Commission while other armed groups had one representative apiece ("we are all just as much political-military organizations as they are"), insistence that there be a careful census of refugees with participation of traditional chiefs (on the ground that many refugees were not, they claimed, Congolese), urging that freeing of detained persons be placed further forward in the timetable, and requesting more logistical and monetary help. Almstrom noted that while a de facto ceasefire in South Kivu had existed for many months, MONUC hoped that in the event of any violence all parties would contact the MONUC focal point for immediate investigation.

19. (SBU) The delegation again helicoptered to Bukavu on February 5. The meeting with six representatives of the FRF/Group of 47 followed similar lines with a similar result: guarded acceptance of the structure and timetable, on the understanding that these were notional. FRF representatives went through an even longer list of their own grievances: creating a separate territory of Minembwe, assuring amnesty prior to the establishment of the Technical Commission, suppressing hate-mongering, dealing with FDLR, removing rival Banyamulenge Colonel Pacifique Masunzu as deputy commander of the 10th Military Region, inquiry into massacres, return of refugees, assuring appropriate ranks for their officers upon brassage (a process to be overhauled), and economic development of the Minembwe High Plains region. Many of these reflected longstanding demands of their allies among Kinshasa-based Banyamulenge politicians.

¶10. (SBU) Etumba, who had downplayed the naming of two FRF commission representatives the previous day, emphasized it in this meeting. He went through all the FRF's grievances, explaining that most of them could not be addressed at this stage but later when the Technical Commission and other commissions began their work. Almstrom urged that FRF stay in constant contact with MONUC, noting that MONUC would act at once to reinforce its base in the Banyamulenge area.

¶11. (SBU) Norbert Basengezi Katintima, a key leader of the Kivus Conference and former governor of South Kivu who was accompanying Kalume and Kamerhe on their earthquake trip, briefly stopped by MONUC-Bukavu and told international facilitators that he anticipated that Etumba would be appointed as the government's key figure on the Technical Commission.

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With CNDP in Goma  
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¶12. (SBU) At CNDP's request, Etumba met a CNDP military delegation at MONUC headquarters in Goma on February 6. The delegation included senior CNDP member Col. Moses Kambala (an English-speaking Ugandan), military spokesman Major Seraphin Mirindi, and Captain B. Masuzera (who had attended the meetings the previous week); no CNDP political members were present. Mirindi presented at length the CNDP's own organigram and proposal for representation on the Technical Commission and its sub-commissions (reftel), which CNDP had conveyed to FARDC and MONUC on February 3. Mirindi thanked Etumba for having expeditiously ordered the release of two CNDP members who had been arrested in Goma two days' previously.

¶13. (SBU) Etumba expressed perplexity at CNDP's organigram. He said that CNDP had approved of his organigram and timetable at the meeting on January 31 and now they seemed to be throwing everything into question. He urged the CNDP to realize that these meetings were only preliminary, with nothing set in concrete. On security, he said that he was determined to address CNDP's concerns. He admitted that there were "extremist elements" in the police and military forces, but 8th Military Region commander Vaigueur Mayala (sitting beside him) would carry out his clear orders to curb such extremists.

KINSHASA 00000143 003 OF 004

¶14. (SBU) Mirindi said that CNDP had difficulty with the way in which the government had proceeded, by not engaging CNDP in adequate advance discussions. In particular, it objected to the issuance of the presidential decree February 2 with no advance warning. The CNDP representatives were only now receiving a hard copy, thanks to the international facilitators. Mirindi said that when the CNDP had met Kamerhe during the Kivus Conference, he had promised that the structure, timetable, and decree would all be carefully discussed in advance with CNDP. CNDP appreciated that Etumba was now characterizing his timetable as "adaptable," which had not been the case at first. Mirindi said that CNDP would need to have its logistical needs taken care of.

¶15. (SBU) Etumba responded that the government had not given him any wherewithal for such a purpose, but he promised "the means will be there." (Note: Etumba evidently took for granted a willingness of the international community to pay any costs. End note.) As for CNDP's listing of positions to be filled by CNDP at the "cell" and "sub-cell" levels, Etumba said such decisions would be made by the Technical Commission once it was established. He emphasized that decisions would be consensual, so it should not matter whether a given party was outnumbered on any committee. Mirindi said that consensuality was very important to the CNDP. Almstrom pointed out that MONUC had its own misgivings about Etumba's proposed timetable -- for example, it seemed very doubtful that 14,000 armed men could be integrated into the army or reinserted into society, or even depart for such integration or reinsertion, within 37 days. Singh assured CNDP that MONUC's monitoring system would be immediately reinforced with officers capable in French and Swahili, and urged the importance of bringing all ceasefire violations immediately to

the attention of the MONUC focal point or nearest MONUC base.

¶16. (SBU) After a long break for internal discussion among the CNDP delegation, Mirindi said that CNDP accepted both Etumba's organigram and timetable, with the understanding that they were provisional. He said that CNDP would have to ponder further the issue of participants in committees. Security continued to be a serious concern for CNDP, such that the CNDP delegation in Goma felt that it would have to be continuously protected either by its own forces or by MONUC. Etumba repeated that FARDC, under his strict orders, would protect CNDP, with MONUC's help.

¶17. (SBU) Mirindi said that CNDP took strong exception to a recent DRC-Ugandan communiqué which, he claimed, called for the elimination of negative forces with specific mention of CNDP. Etumba said he knew nothing about it, there had to be a misunderstanding, and in any case, the work of the conference and Acte d'Engagement took precedence over any possible mispronouncement in a communiqué. Etumba's comment, however, appeared to mollify the CNDP representatives.

¶18. Note: The reference is possibly to a communiqué issued by the Ugandan and Congolese defense ministers following a meeting the week before in Beni. It alluded to negative forces but not to CNDP specifically. Separately, Mgr. J. M. Runiga, who has acted as an informal intermediary of Kabila's to Nkunda, also said that the CNDP was quite angry about the DRC-Uganda communiqué. End note.

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Meeting with North Kivu Mai Mai  
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¶19. (SBU) Prior to finally leaving Goma for Kinshasa midday February 7, Etumba convened the North Kivu Mai Mai groups at MONUC-Goma. The Mai Mai were supposed to have returned to their home areas to sensitize their cadres about the Acte, but were evidently hanging around Goma to get the latest information and seeking an audience to vent their mounting anger. Seven of eight North Kivu Mai Mai signatories of the Acte were present. Etumba displayed less patience than in previous meetings, but gave them the floor.

¶20. (SBU) Sounding a similar theme to that of the CNDP, the Mai Mai representatives lamented that the presidential decree establishing the "Peace Program" had not been discussed with them in advance. Some of them had picked up a rumor that a new decree had been issued in Kinshasa -- with equal lack of forewarning -- naming personnel to specific posts in the "Peace Program," including the Mixed Technical Commission for Peace and Security. (Note: MONUC/Goma had similar information, but no specifics, while Etumba professed ignorance of any new decree.) The Mai Mai representatives were particularly upset that the decree had awarded CNDP and FRF two delegates to the Technical Commission but other signatory armed groups only one --

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\* Missing Section 004 \*  
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